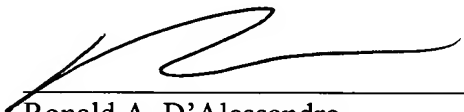


IV. Remarks

Claims 1, 3-14, 16-23 and 25-30 are pending. By this Preliminary Amendment, claims 1, 3-4, 8-11, 13, 17, 19-21, 23, 25-27 and 29-30 have been amended, while claims 2, 5, 12, 15 and 24 have been cancelled. The pending claims are believed to represent the species shown in Fig. 4. No new matter is believed added

In light of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that all claims are in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner require anything further to place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,


Ronald A. D'Alessandro
Reg. No.: 42,456

Date: 1/22/04
Hoffman, Warnick & D'Alessandro LLC
Three E-Comm Square
Albany, New York 12207
(518) 449-0044
(518) 449-0047 (fax)